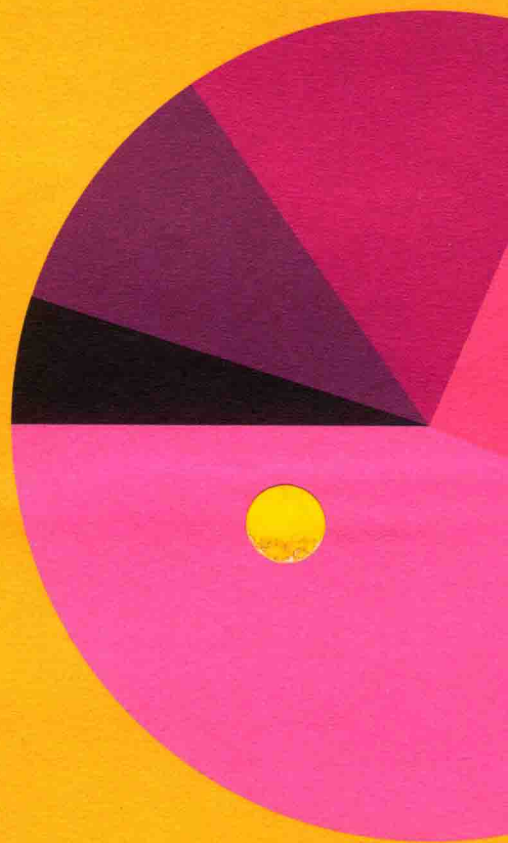


*WHAT
ME
WORRY*

Andrew Kuo



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Text © Kelefa Sanneh

Andrew Kuo
What Me Worry

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All works courtesy Taxter & Spengemann, New York

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Standard PRESS

23 E.4th Street 5th Floor
New York, NY 10003
www.thestandardnewyork.com

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Printed in October 2010 by Grafiche Damiani, Bologna, Italy.

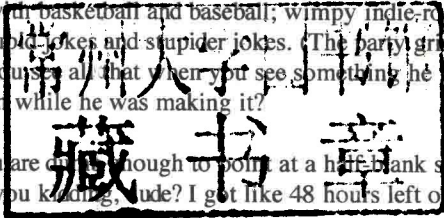
978-88-6208-153-5

Printed on Tintoretto Gesso 140 gram, Hello Matt 170 gram, and Arcoset 80 gram

Printed in Italy by
Grafiche Damiani
www.grafichedamiani.it

Distributed in the United States of America by
D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, Inc.
155 Sixth Avenue
New York, NY 10013
www.artbook.com

What Kuo Worry

1. Andrew Kuo has an art show called "What Me Worry" at 33 Bond Gallery on 33 Bond Street, in New York, starting on November 29, 2007. The show is named after the Mad Magazine slogan. Except that he took out the comma. Or forgot about it. Is it a coincidence that his friend has a tattoo with those same words? Is it ever! What a rip-off.
2. If you walk into Andrew Kuo's studio, which is also his apartment, and tell him that one of his dense and meticulous and not-at-all spray-painted works sort of reminds you of graffiti, he will put his hand on his head. "Oh, man," he will say, looking as if he's going to puke. "I'm kind of freaking out a little bit." You will make reassuring noises. You will tell him that you were just kidding. You will tell him that you don't know what you're talking about. You will tell him that you're an idiot. You will be right about those three things and wrong about the art. But he will keep his hand on his head, and you will start to suspect that he is going to wake up in the middle of the night, second-guessing himself. That makes four things you will be right about.
3. Andrew Kuo is probably stressing out about this show right now. Even if it's already over by the time you read this. Especially if it's already over.
4. A lot of people (most people, maybe) feel like they know Andrew Kuo better than they really do, and sometimes it seems like everyone who knows him feels comfortable telling him why he should or shouldn't send an IM to you-know-who or what's-her-name, or telling him he needs to see a shrink, or telling him he needs to stop going out so much, or telling him he needs to stop sitting around at home so much, or telling him that his next art show should include some of those graphs he makes, because everyone loves them, and because who cares if they seem gimmicky. This must be really annoying, but in some weird way it must be what he wants, because otherwise, wouldn't he just shut people out, the way most of us do, now and then, more or less?
5. Otherwise, wouldn't Andrew Kuo have written his artist's statement himself?
6. Yes, this show includes some of those graphs Andrew Kuo makes.
7. If you see Andrew Kuo's art and then you meet him and he's different than you expected, or if you know him and then you see his art and it's not what you imagined -- well, are you missing something? Or is he?
8. In other words: Andrew Kuo is obsessed with basketball and baseball; wimpy indie-rock and filthy raps; cheap Chinese dinners and Food Network; stupid jokes and stupider jokes. The party grinds to a halt whenever he says, "Why did the . . . ?") Do you see all that when you see something he made? Or is it enough to know that the TV was probably on while he was making it?
9. If you are in Andrew Kuo's studio and you are  enough to point at a half-blank sheet and ask if it's finished, he will laugh at you and say, "Are you kidding, dude? I got like 48 hours left on this!"
10. Then, if you include this quote in a rough draft of Andrew Kuo's (fake) artist's statement, he will eventually admit that it makes him feel like an asshole, because the last thing he wants to do is brag or whine about how long his art takes, especially since 48 hours isn't even all that long, really.
11. You will consider removing the quote, but eventually you will decide to leave it in, because who are you to say that Andrew Kuo is not an asshole?

Kelefa Sanneh
November, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Andrew Kuo—*I'm Dyin' Over Here!*

April 4 – May 9, 2009

Opening reception Saturday, April 4th, 6-8 PM

For more information please contact info@taxterandspengemann.com

Okay. Andrew Kuo walks into a bar. Doesn't matter which one. Maybe the one where he used to be known as Mr. Feelings. That was back when he would stay out until closing time and end up all soggy from thinking about his dad or that epic break-up. Seems like these days he's more likely to start off grumpy and then get happy and then get fuzzy and then disappear. It's not a habit, exactly. More like a ritual. (Uh-oh. The dudes from the Hold Steady called. They want their lyrical formula back.)

Anyway: Andrew Kuo walks into a bar and orders some tequila. Actually, this will work better if it's not one of his usual bars, so say it's some weird place in some weird neighborhood where he doesn't know anyone. Which would be weird in itself, because usually it seems like he knows everyone, and everyone knows him, or thinks they do. When he's at home staring at his cats he's probably wishing he were at some bar making jokes about Lil Wayne and trying to figure out if that girl (which one?) likes him. And when he's out he probably wishes he were home, staring at his cats or watching the Big Five. (He spelled it out in an email the other day: "Travel Network, Food Network, Bravo, ESPN, and TNT.") Is he really that predictable? And so what if he is?

So Andrew Kuo is in this strange (but not weird, really) bar and he says, "Let me get three Jamesons, neat." He was all about tequila for a while -- Patrón, at first, then Herradura. But now he's back to whiskey. One day, he will analyze the correlation between his intake and his output. He will figure out exactly what he was drinking a few years ago, when he was mainly making these big, fancy-looking pieces out of layered paper, with abstract silk-screened patterns and a shit-ton of tiny holes cut out. He still does some of those. Cutouts, he calls them, and the main ingredients are patience and technique and time. Which means a cutout is another kind of ritual.

Back to the bar: Andrew Kuo is standing there, and he's got his three Jamesons, neat, and he looks like he just ordered a round for his friends, except he's by himself. He's thinking the same thoughts over and over. *God. I gotta make more shit. It's terrifying, man. I'm not stressed. I could live with a mediocre show. There's always other places to prove yourself.* Is that how he feels? Or is he working, trying to come up with text for his next piece? Those cutouts are secretly emo, but he felt like he needed to do something less secret, more obvious, so he decided to turn his feelings into scientific-looking graphs, with captions to tell you exactly what each colored bar or wedge stood for. He tries to be as accurate as possible, and sometimes he changes his mind, or fucks up. Most of his graphs include some corrections or revisions, as well as a date, which helps him keep track of what he was freaking out about when. (One afternoon in his studio, eating Chicken McNuggets, he said, "I feel myself repeating myself." He didn't sound bummed out.)

If you've seen any of those graphs then you can probably predict what happens next: Andrew Kuo is in this bar, and he picks up his first glass of Jameson and downs it like it was a shot. He notices that the bartender has noticed him, so he forces a smile and says, "You'd be pounding whiskey, too, if you had what I have." He has been making graphs for years, now. Sometimes he makes graphs about music for the newspaper, or for his blog. Recently he's gotten into using multiple graphs to create simple pictograms, which is sort of like doodling with a very big, very complicated pen. Two pie charts + one horizontal line graph (with data mapped out to resemble a flattened bell curve) = one frowny face. He's dyin' over there.

As soon as the first whiskey is gone, Andrew Kuo is downing the second one, and when the bartender says, "Wow," sounding impressed and maybe a little bit worried, Andrew Kuo just shrugs and says, "Hey, if you had what I've got, you'd drink like this, too." He was totally satisfied with those graphs, at first. In fact, he's still satisfied with them, but he started thinking about how they were a little bit indirect. What if, instead of making abstract shapes and telling people what they meant, he just started showing people things? What if he started painting pictures? He painted some pictures of his head. He painted a picture of that awkward night with his ex. He painted a picture of Minor Threat. He couldn't quite figure out what he was making, and why. He kind of hoped he never would.

Only one whiskey left, and Andrew Kuo kills it as quickly as he killed the first two. The bartender is like, "Are you okay man?" Andrew Kuo puts the empty glass back on the table and says, "You'd be pounding whiskey, too, if you had what I have." Wait -- that's what he said the first time. So maybe this time, he changes the wording a little bit. Maybe he says, "Yeah I'm fine. But this is the only way I can drink, considering what I have." Point is, he's saying the same thing over and over.

And the bartender finally takes the bait. "You keep saying that," he says. "So what do you have?"

"Two dollars," says Andrew Kuo. He puts the money on the bar and runs out the front door and runs all the way back to his studio.

Kelefa Sanneh
March, 2009



Andrew Kuo *Rodney Dangerfield's Last Breath*, 2009, acrylic on linen 11 x 14 inches

THE ARTIST

by Kelefa Sanneh

The Artist: An Auxological Perspective

One day in 1946, Sammy Davis, Jr., went to see his friend Billy Eckstine. He was broke, and he asked Eckstine to lend him five dollars. Eckstine didn't respond, so Davis stuck around to watch his act. Decades later, Davis remembered the feeling: "He was everything I was not: tall"—Davis was five-five—"and good-looking and sure of himself, and he had every right to be." After the set, Eckstine slipped Davis something, which turned out to be a hundred-dollar bill.

Davis converted to Judaism after a car accident, and he told one rabbi that he was drawn to the religion by its message of possibility: "I love the idea that we can all reach for the brass ring and we can keep stretching until we're tall enough to reach it."

Maria Bartiromo, the CNBC anchor, has written a self-help book called, "The 10 Laws of Enduring Success." Each law gets a chapter, and each chapter title is a noun. In order: self-knowledge, vision, initiative, courage, integrity, adaptability, humility, endurance, purpose, resilience. In the self-knowledge chapter, she writes about setting reasonable goals: "If you're five foot two, you wouldn't say, 'I'd be successful if I played for the NBA.'"

Around the same time the book was published, there was a profile of Bartiromo in *Vanity Fair*. From the first paragraph: "[S]he arrived looking lovely and earnest, and not as tall as she seems to be on TV. She's five feet five, she told me. 'But on television, everyone is the same height.' (They adjust the chairs.)"

Atmore is a small town in Southern Alabama, on the Florida border. In 2007, the police reported that a seventy-year-old man had shot his sixty-two-year-old friend in the abdomen, twice. Apparently, the men had been arguing about James Brown. More specifically: they had been arguing over how tall he was. Some reports say he was five foot five, but no one seems to know for sure.

In the last days of 1998, the Buffalo Bills and the Miami Dolphins were preparing to meet in the A.F.C. wild-card game. In an interview, Buffalo's quarterback, Doug Flutie, accused the Dolphins' cornerbacks of illegal holding. Sam Madison, one of the cornerbacks, said, "What is he, five-five?" He added, "I can't wait to get him on the ground, so I can shove Flutie Flakes down his throat."

The Dolphins won, and although Flutie played seven more seasons, he never got another chance in the postseason. In the locker room after the game, Jimmy Johnson, the Dolphins' head coach, reportedly punched or stomped a box of Flutie Flakes, spraying cereal everywhere. But don't worry about Flutie—it turns out that Madison was wrong, possibly by as much as five inches.

In "School Daze," the Spike Lee movie from 1988, Lee plays Half-Pint, a glasses-wearing college kid trying to join Gamma Phi Gamma. Giancarlo Esposito plays Julian, leader of the Gammas. Early on, the lowly Gammities line up for inspection; Julian goes down the row and stops at Half-Pint, leaning in close.

"Half-Pint," says Julian.

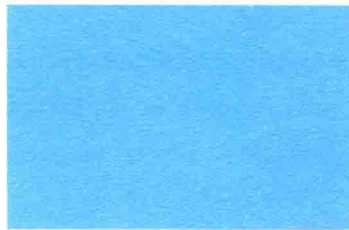
"Yes, Dean Big Brother Almigh-tee," says Half-Pint.

"How tall are you?"

"Five feet, five inches," says Half-Pint.

"Yeah," says Julian. "You're a five foot, five inch *piece of shit*."

"Yes, Dean Big Brother Almigh-tee," says Half-Pint.



Sammy Davis, Jr., backstage
(date unknown)

An issue of *Time* from October, 1996, has an illustration on the cover showing a man in a suit standing head and shoulders above a sea of shorter men in suits. There are clouds around the tall man's shoulders, and he is enjoying the sun, while all the shorter men are suffer through the rain. The headline reads, "Upward and Onward," and the article inside is about "the emerging science of auxology, the study of human growth." Height is adduced as a rough measure of "healthiness and social well-being," and the increasing tallness of Europeans is noted. The article is about as upbeat and optimistic as the illustration on the cover. But look at the cover again, and imagine it in reverse: a sea of taller men, enjoying the sun; one shorter man down below, getting rained on. That would be a more beneficial arrangement, but perhaps not a happier one. Downward and backward.

On the Internet, someone asks a question: "Is five foot five for a 14 year old boy short, medium or tall?" One person tells him he's average for his age. This is Yahoo! Answers, where kindness is more the rule than the exception. Another response: "That's fine. Don't worry." Yet another: "Today in the USA it's the top of short," says Terry, who claims to be a retired nurse. "In Japan, China, etc. it's normal."

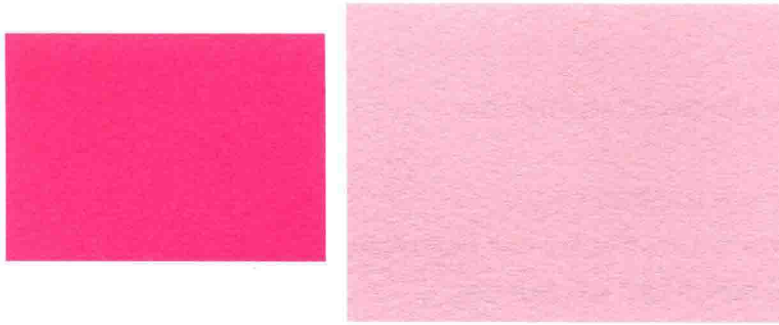
O.J. Simpson is six foot one, which was above average for an N.F.L. running back, and still is. Nicole Brown Simpson was about five foot five.

George and Jerry are sitting in a booth at the diner. George is wearing a plaid shirt in autumn colors. He says, "You know what I'd like to do? I'd really like to have sex with a tall woman." Laughter. "I mean, really tall, like a, like a giant"—more laughter, and George gestures upward—"like, six-five." (Jason Alexander, who played George, is about five foot five.)

Jerry squints and nods. "Really," he says.

"See, this is all I think about," George says. "Sleeping with a giant."

On October 9, 1977, the New York Yankees and the Kansas City Royals played the fifth and final game of the American League Championship Series. The Royals, the home team, scored two runs in the bottom of the first inning, and they held their lead until the top of the ninth, when the Yankees scored three, due in part to an error committed by Fred Patek, the Royals' shortstop. Patek was unusually short (perhaps five foot five, though some thought he was closer to five foot four), and he was in his prime; he had made the All-Star Team in 1976, and he would make it again in 1978. He got a chance for redemption in the bottom of the ninth: he



(left) Fred Patek clowning around, 1976

(right) David Spade on the set of *Tommy Boy*, 1994

came to the plate with one on and one out and the Royals trailing by two. But Patek swung at the first two pitches and then hit the third one into the infield. The Yankees turned a double play. The game was over, and so was the series, and, for the Royals, the season. Patek stayed in the dugout, alone, after his teammates had shuffled off. It was his thirty-third birthday.

Steve Rubell, the co-founder of Studio 54, died in the summer of 1989. In the days afterward, an anonymous “family friend” offered a brief psychological portrait in *New York* magazine. The friend said, “His brother, who was tall and good-looking, became a doctor. So he was driven. People who are shorter sing and dance faster. He was always saying, ‘Hey, I’m here.’” Rubell was five-five. According to the article, they used to call him Little Stevie Wonder, which is also what they used to call Stevie Wonder.

A very partial list of other people who allegedly know how it feels: Senator Al Franken, who was a wrestler in high school; Brian Johnson, lead singer of AC/DC, who nevertheless towers over the guitarists; Mel Brooks and, likewise, Woody Allen; Billy Joel, who probably doesn’t like to talk about it; Daniel Radcliffe, who doesn’t seem to mind talking about it; Lil Boosie, who might never get out of jail; Alicia Silverstone, who has earned the celebrity equivalent of tenure, but probably doesn’t want it; Trindon Holliday, a running back who is just starting his N.F.L. career; Silvio Berlusconi, the Prime Minister of Italy, and Nicolas Sarkozy, the President of France, and Diego Maradona, the pride of Argentina; Aaliyah, who never hooked up with Jet Li in “Romeo Must Die” (she said they filmed a kiss but decided not to use it); Thom Yorke and Bishop Desmond Tutu and David Spade and Aretha Franklin and Dustin Hoffman and Barbara Walters and Bow Wow.

—

Remarks From the Artist in His Studio, Presented in Chronological Order, Annotated but Otherwise Unedited

I don’t want to die without saying this. It leaves little to the imagination. In terms of putting it in a book, it’s scary, because I don’t get to curate who sees it.

I don’t even know if it feels like art¹, but I was compelled to do it for three years.

I think there’s too much already². It’s time to whittle down. For a while I was producing so much, I felt like I had to slow down³ and actually experience things without talking about them⁵. Go to the show and not worry about analyzing it⁵.

I mean, the whole conversation of, “I’m so sad, I miss my dad, I don’t want to die”? Sure. And maybe⁶ I’ll be ready to talk about it again. I don’t know. You want another beer?

The one person I keep thinking about is Conor Oberst. Because he didn't leave anything to the imagination. And I like that. But at a certain point, it's just like, wait a minute. Did that girl really exist? And I take liberties with things. I like to exaggerate.

Is it accurate? Frighteningly so.

I was making these cutouts, and it was just so polished. I mean, I'm a loudmouth⁷.

It's very nineties. Like, super heavy-handed. But whatever—this whole thing is super, super heavy-handed.

¹ Really, dude?

² Really, dude?

³ Really, dude?

⁴ Really, dude?

⁵ Really, dude?

⁶ Really, dude?

⁶ Really, dude?

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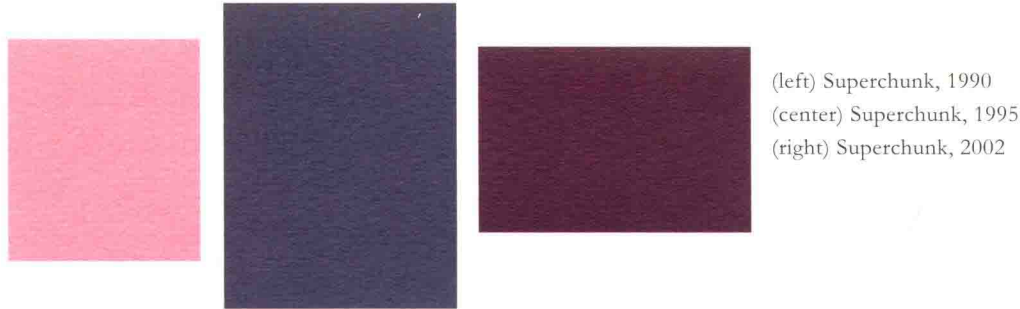
The Artist: A Discographical Perspective

In the summer of 1989, at a party in Raleigh, North Carolina, which may well have been a keg party, a band called Chunk played its first show. The singer was a former hardcore kid named Mac McCaughan, a little guy with longish hair—unless he had cut it by then—who always looked as if he were straining to reach the microphone. The bassist was Laura Ballance a former goth who wasn't so sure she wanted to be in a band. They were a couple. The next year, Chunk became Superchunk, because there was already a band called Chunk, and Superchunk released "Slack Motherfucker," a single named after a song that swiftly became the one they were known for, and probably remains that, twenty years later. Superchunk got popular, in an indie-rock sort of way, selling tens of thousands of albums, even though McCaughan wasn't weird enough to be a true cult hero. Superchunk's 1993 album, "On the Mouth," included a typically ambivalent-sounding song called, "Trash Heap," which works equally well as a call to arms and a resignation notice. It goes, "Pardon this, a trash heap." Or, "Part of this, a trash heap." Hard to tell.

Right before the tour for "On the Mouth," McCaughan and Ballance made an announcement to the rest of the band: they were breaking up, but the band was staying together. The next Superchunk album was called "Foolish." The cover was a painting by Ballance showing a woman and, behind her, a dead rabbit hanging in a doorway. The album included a grand song called, "Driveway to Driveway," which seems to ennoble the break-up, making it easy to imagine the singer as a brave soldier fighting for a lost cause: "Driveway to Driveway drunk, I don't remember this too well/Glad I have the scrapes to prove, prove it was me who fell." There was a black-and-white video in which McCaughan fought some asshole for Ballance's affection. In "Our Noise," a history of the band and their label, Merge Records, Ballance remembers the video: "I can't believe I didn't just go, 'No!' Because it was torture. I dreaded every minute of having to participate in that. I cried a lot. You can probably see it on my face in the video. It sucked. Mac and I were just barely talking then."

Around the same time as the break-up, McCaughan started Portastatic, a solo project that was meant to give him an outlet for smaller, quieter songs. One day, McCaughan got a letter from an art-school kid who published a

fanzine called *Trash Heap*. He wanted to know if McCaughan would be interested in contributing a song to a split single (with the Brooklyn indie band *Ida* on the other side), to be released as a giveaway with the next issue of *Trash Heap*. McCaughan sent back a DAT tape containing a song called, “Too Close to the Screen.” McCaughan later said, “It’s got a lot of my favorite things about making Portastatic records—putting drum machines through distortion and effects boxes, casio organ sounds, the ‘Voice’ setting on the Korg Micro-preset synth, not to mention the fake Tuba solo at the end.”



The most popular Superchunk album is “Here’s Where the Strings Come In,” from 1995, which included a zippy pop-punk song called, “Hyper Enough.” It sold almost fifty thousand copies, and the ones that came after all sold less. In 2002, Superchunk played New York as an opening act, supporting the Get Up Kids, an emo band from Missouri full of guys who had grown up listening to Superchunk. Their young fans didn’t seem too impressed. Somehow, McCaughan enjoyed this tour, and he didn’t get depressed as the rooms he played stayed the same or got smaller. In 2006, McCaughan brought Portastatic—a full band, by then—to the Mercury Lounge, on Houston Street, which has a capacity of two hundred and fifty. He was standing at the merch booth when he saw a guy he dimly remembered from a decade ago. The guy held up his arm to reveal a message written, permanently, in cursive: “Driveway to Driveway.” McCaughan licked his thumb and pretended to try to rub it off.

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Selected Emails From the Artist (Excerpted), 2005-2010

There’ll be a memorial service for my old man Friday at the U.N., but I’m just letting you know. No pressure at all. I’m just letting the bro’s know. On another note, check out my friend’s design skills on this record you probably have never heard of.

The transplants single sucks. I had high hopes for the album. Fuckit. It’s all about the chem. Saw that fallout boy video. That song is sweet, is the album good? And I’m psyched the singer looks like charlie brown.

Thanks for holding it down at my bday. yeah I got emo at _____. The candy set me off for some reason I don’t know why. Sorry you had to see that. It happens. I feel bad though. Next time I will rage.

Dude you’re glad you weren’t around sat. _____ got epic again and _____ flipped out.

no plans. my fantasy football draft pt deux got postponed. damn! i heard mariah was good/ jay? diddy?
fuck the shins. hm i dunno what my plans are yet. work? shredding? it's _____'s bday today. e-mail me later.

i'm a little hungover. i walked to _____ with droopy flowers and then _____ showed me his phone
where i was listed as 'mr feelings.' haha. last night was pretty shredding. i'm bummed i had to 'dj' for so long.
i have to go beat _____ at ping pong tonight. it's _____'s birthday.

last night i walk into _____. _____ moshing. terrorizing the djs. diving into crowds of dudes. slap-
ping drinking out of hands. 'KUO SOMEONE HAS TO ARREST ME I TRIED TO PUNCH 5 DIFFERENT
PEOPLE.' no shirt on.

i got 2 smog records and they are literally melting my brain. making me all want to stay home and
listen to smog and watch the nba with the sound off. so i bailed on socializing with weirdo's.

mac wants to buy one of my paintings. no big deal.

typical shit in my life. every situation is the same for me. we talked all night til closing, while getting
interrupted by _____ and _____ trying to hit on _____. seriously the minute i stepped away they were like,
'what's your number let's get up.' _____ is a complete weirdo. his move last night was to touch _____ and go,
'see, i'm not afraid of getting burned' and left his finger there for minutes! she was like, 'okaaaay you're totally
scaring me.' he didn't budge. so we got pizza and i walked her to a cab and i asked if i could kiss her.

i am having living problems. i'll spare you the details. i still enjoy jokes, but i feel like i'm going to
pass out on street corners. nothing's jamming as far as i know. food? drinks? i have no kuopenings or shows to
lurk at [that i remember].

back to the same ol'. i'm dying over here. she leaves in 2 days. i'm gonna flip out. don't flip out.

_____ SHREDDDED. packed. i yelled at _____ about money. he was bro. _____ played some spoken
word. i played UGK twice and some jon bonham drum demo's into black dice [the hardcore era]. that girl is
shoveling dirt on my grave. today i said to her, 'have a good day stranger.' and she said 'why 'stranger?'" it's
weird how you can like someone so much without really knowing her.

poor _____... that record is just whatever. _____ claimed he was 'SO AMPED' on it, and then he
played it and was like, 'this sucks.' obviously he hadn't heard it yet. stop snitchin.

i'm on secret vacation. which means i do what i usually do but refuse to feel guilty about it [drinking,
waking up late, etc].

i was up til 5am last night asking my computer: 'why aren't these shapes saying anything to me?
quick. say something clever!' i woke up in the middle of the night with a genius idea and then i looked at it this
morning and i saw that i drew a square.

dude the gallery wants to know when i can give them the artists statement. do you still have time to do
it? it can be jokes or fake serious or whatever. you can come in and look at the stuff or you can just guess.

i had a dream last night i was hanging out with feist and i had to sing one of her songs at a wedding,
but instead i crawled into a crack in the wall and no one could see me.

i actually don't believe in second chances in life. i think you are presented with choices, and they are
never the same. the variables shift and the whole thing is different. so you get chances. just not second ones.
but i do believe in redemption, which is different. it's like when a runner gets picked off at first base and the

batter ends up hitting a home run. the announcers always say 'that pick-off now looms large. that could have been a two run shot' not true. because the variables changed and the pitcher wasn't throwing from the stretch and he probably left a fattie over the plate to challenge the batter a little. if that all makes sense.

dunno how close you are to _____ these days, but her dad passed away. it's weird but i thought you should know. maybe send her an e-mail or something.

weird how when jeezy says 'i can show you how to make a mil right now' i think he's saying 'i can show you how to make a meal right now.'

we kept track of drink consumption. me and _____ 58. _____ and _____ 43. _____ claims he got up in the middle of the night and started peeing in the closet. _____ goes 'dude. you're peeing in the closet' and apparently he said 'that's what she said.' and climbed back into bed.

i swear I had the weirdest night last night. thanks for the \$100 i got you back. damn when that cash hit my hand shit went off.

no IM chat but we did hang out all day. dude. weird timez. you should have denied me the cash so i could have gone fucking home.

_____ is kind of irritating to me. but it just occurred to me last night. i dunno. that room was tricky.

would you be willing to do my press release for my show coming up? take a piss. write a book. draw a picture. take a photo. i'm game for anything.

i think i'm on semi-lockdown today/tonight. i figured out it takes a night of shuffling things around/ watching BBC/painting stuff white before the next day when everything 'comes together.' today has to be that day

for lack of anything better to think about SUPER BOWL WHAT'S THE PLAN i can make asian ribs?

i think i told you i'm publishing a book through _____. it's gonna be a 200 pager (hopefully) [...] it was just gonna be a mashup of my personal charts, the _____ charts, the emo _____ e-mails and the recipe _____ emails. i was wondering if you would write the intro to it?

Scenario: sat: tape the fight and party with _____ crew. (to which of course you are invited to) sunday: eat delicious delicious peking duck and then watch fight on TiVO. _____ passes out and you convince me to go to _____. 'FINE.' Ramifications/fears: somehow a miracle happens and _____ texts me back and i go off to hang out aka get drunk and make out with her and we delay the fight for no reason and one of us is a douche.

oh dude she is kind of my fantasy. that's why i put up with all this bullshit. i would leave a superchunk show to buy her a drink.



(left) The artist (waving, near the back) with friends; date unknown, probably 2004
(right) Ludlow Street, 4:30 a.m.

no funny business but it was close. we're at the point that we can act like total retards/creeps around each other and it's fine. i texted _____ late telling her thanks for not making a cake but that sounded rude so i tried to word it better but i was a fucking mess by that point. oh and another _____ text session. i don't want to look at my phone.

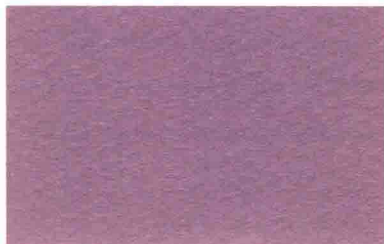


The artist and _____, 2008

The Artist: An Athletic Perspective

Earl Boykins is a point guard. He has played for the Cleveland Central Catholic Ironmen, the Eastern Michigan Eagles, the Rockford (Illinois) Lightning, the New Jersey Nets, the Cleveland Cavaliers, the Orlando Magic, the Los Angeles Clippers, the Golden State Warriors, the Denver Nuggets, the Milwaukee Bucks, the Charlotte Bobcats, Virtus Bologna (Italy), the Washington Wizards, and the Milwaukee Bucks (again). He holds the record for most points scored in overtime in an N.B.A. game: fifteen.

They say he used to dribble a tennis ball because his hands were too small for a basketball. They say he can be a ball hog. They say he once hid in his locker after losing a playoff game in college. They say a coach once listed him at five-eleven so he (the coach) wouldn't look stupid for starting a player who is only five-five. They say he can bench press three hundred and fifteen pounds. They say he hated it when the arena played "It's a Small World" to mark his arrival on the court. They say the Clippers never should have traded him. They say his "best days as a bench sparkplug are behind him." They say he is excited to be back in Milwaukee.



(left) Earl Boykins driving through the lane in Madison Square Garden, December 12, 2004 (the Knicks beat the Nuggets, 107-96)
(right) Earl Boykins in Italy, 2008

Advice to the Artist From His Friends, Who Shall Remain Anonymous

I don't know if shotgunning beers is the best thing to do in a group situation. Although I like the way it inspires people's juvenile's fantasies, in their late thirties. I feel like it helps people get back on the boat they think they missed. But I don't know if it's necessarily good for him in the long haul. That's the thing that's problematic in general—I think there's a lot of things that Andrew does that make people happy, but then I wonder if it's the best thing for Andrew. I don't know if that's advice, though.

Art advice? Work advice? I would *never* do that.

You think about the people he's obsessed with, and they're super crazy, or otherwise unavailable. It might be even worse if one of those girls did fall for him. Because then he'd be dating a fucking lunatic. Which might be the best year of his life. It might be the year he finally gets famous.

I think he lives the life of some songs that he listened to when he was fifteen years old that never wore off.

That's the funniest question anyone has ever asked me: What is my advice for Andrew Kuo? God, I have so much. But I also feel like I'm such a bad person for that question. It's like the blind leading the blind. I don't make anything. He makes shit. Who am I to judge?

I think he's pretty aware of how he lets people in. I think there's something comforting to him about that. He's the rad dude who always says hello, gets you a drink, can talk about music, sports, food, and any other topic. I mean, everyone is like, "Kuo! I know him! I love that guy!" And it's safe for him. He doesn't have to talk about work, where he sees his art going, and the things that keep him up at night.

I think I learned not to give advice. Because I don't want to ever fight with him. Because always, the advice that I give leads to some sort of argument.

There's probably something nice about having this little part of yourself that's always disappointed in the way life works.

The thing is, for all his sulking, he never really seems unhappy.

He has a great life. The dude is living, like, three awesome lives.

I think a regular part of his day, or his life, is this intense loneliness.

He's like an open book. But he's kind of stubborn, at the same time. Which isn't the same as being closed. He's a good listener. I don't think he really likes advice.

He's so willing to have a hundred relationships with his quote-unquote close friends that he doesn't see sober. And he's willing to have other relationships with bros, where you really do love him, and have an understanding of him. But he seems pretty unwilling to have any relationship where you get to know a girl the way you might if you had a girlfriend for a couple of years. That probably means a lot more than a dude doesn't want a girlfriend. I just don't know what it means.

This is the whole dilemma with Andrew Kuo: there's no way to tell what he wants.

That's ultimately an anxiety thing: "I'm gonna say all of this, because I'm pent up about it," or, "I'm not gonna say any of it, because I'm pent up about it." It all cancels out. But he presents himself as very

vulnerable. A beautiful girl will be like, “Oh, Andrew, I feel so comfortable with you.” It’s like, “This person is crying out!” Well, maybe not. Maybe that’s how they communicate. Maybe that’s just their way of making friends.

Advice to the Artist From Strangers, Who Shall Remain Anonymous (As Inscribed in the Gallery Sign-In Book at Taxter & Spengemann)

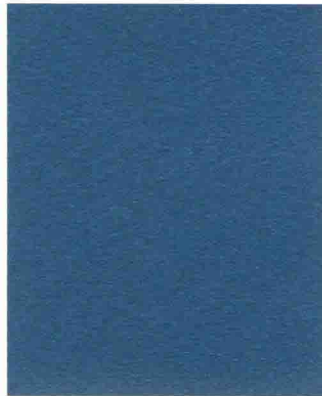
You will be “happy-wise” always!

Try not drinking for ninety days. You will feel better. But maybe you like it? I like your work a lot.

Hilarious and beautiful. Truly encapsulates the comedy/tragedy that has always been “life,” especially modern life. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and talents. P.S. Maybe you should listen to _____ and lay off the booze. But who am I to criticize?

In Memory of the Artist’s Father, Who Also Knew Exactly How It Feels, Right?

“Yes. But he didn’t look short, like I do. I think so—I don’t know.”



The artist and his father, 1999

